

THE FUNCTIONS OF *naho* IN ALABAMA DISCOURSE

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1. Introduction. The Alabama language is a member of the Muskogean language family and is currently spoken by approximately 300 members of the tribe, which now resides on the Alabama-Coushatta Indian Reservation in east Texas.¹ Although a great deal of research has been devoted to the Muskogean languages over the past fifteen years, very little has been concerned with discourse structure or with linguistic expressions that perform specifically discourse functions. I begin the discussion of what I hope will be a fruitful avenue of research into Alabama discourse by attempting to describe some of the developing discourse functions of a single verb stem *naho*.

I start by describing in section 2 the basic use of *naho* as an ordinary main verb with both an active ('do, use') and a stative ('be, have') form. Beyond these ordinary main verb uses, however, *naho* occurs with verbal morphology in a number of functions that have not been reported before in Alabama. The grammaticalization of *naho* as a perfect auxiliary is discussed in section 3 and its use (without morphology) as a pause-filler in section 4. In section 5 I describe the use of *naho* as a stem in the formation of conjunctions of various types and show that it appears to be acquiring a variety of important and diverse discourse functions.

Naho can in fact be shown to fit Schifffrin's (1987:31) definition of a DISCOURSE MARKER, and to meet the conditions that she proposes must be met for linguistic items to develop into discourse markers. *Naho* also occurs with noun morphology in construction with a following noun as yet another kind of discourse marker.² However, the present paper focuses more narrowly on describing the discourse functions of *naho* when it is

¹I am grateful to the members of the Alabama tribe who have helped me through the years in my study of their language, particularly Dorcas Bullock, Vincent Celestine, Wanda Poncho, and the late Cora Sylestine. I thank Wanda Poncho and the late James Sylestine for making available to me tape recordings they have made of other speakers. All examples in this paper come from my own notes unless otherwise indicated. Thanks to Don Hardy for helpful discussion of this paper and to the Graduate School of Northern Illinois University for supporting recent field research.

²To my knowledge the occurrence of *naho* with noun morphology has not been reported for either Alabama, or the closely related language Koasati.

àaya-fihna-li-y-o-k nàaso-n naho-tákko-hchi ommi-o
 go:around-a:lot-1SG-TOP-ASP-K thing-OBL do-1SGNEG-ASP be-ASP
 'I run around so much I don't do anything.'

- (2) *nàastalaami mĩntaya honahotĩkkotòoli?*
 nàastalaami mĩnta-ya ho-naho-tĩkko-t-òoli
 animal other-TOP DIS-do-3NEG-FST-EVID
 'Didn't they use the other animals for anything?'

With its very general sense of performing some activity, *naho* is often used in cases where a specific action is not known (as in 1 and 2).

2.2. As a stative verb in existential, locative, and indefinite possessive constructions. *Naho* is used in its stative form to predicate existence, location, and possession. Clark (1970) argues that such constructions are essentially locatives and that many languages encode them with a single or related form. Existential and locative constructions such as those in 3 and 4 generally require inanimate subjects. The semantics of *naho* in this function is much less specific than those of the many Alabama positional/motion verbs, with meanings such as 'sit', 'stand', 'go around', that are used with animates (and a number of inanimates) to express location (3) or existence (4).

- (3) *bitkok nàahoolo, maaafayon*
 bitka-o-k nàaho-ooli-o maa-fa-y-o-n
 dance-DET-NOM be:there-EVID-ASP that-LOC-TOP-DET-OBL
 'there is a dance at that place'
- (4) *telephonekak himáak nàahómmoonaamon*
 telephone-ka-k himáak nàahó-mmoona-:ma-o-n
 telephone-FRN-NOM day be:there-first-SJNC-ASP-N
 'at the time when the telephone first existed'

The predication of possession of an indefinite (unidentifiable) referent is achieved by prefixing the dative *im-* applicative prefix to *naho*. The possessed entity is always marked in the nominative (with *-k*) as shown in 5 and 6, although a pragmatically important possessor can also be marked in the nominative as in 5. The possessor controls pronominal marking on the dative verb as shown in 6, which has a first plural possessor; third person reference is unmarked.

- (5) *Joseph Marik aatosik innàaholan òmmĩn*
 Joseph Mari-k aatosi-k in-nàaho-la-n òmmi-n
 Joseph Mary-NOM baby-NOM DAT-have-FUT-N be<FGR>-N
 'it was that Joseph and Mary were going to have a baby'
- (6) *holisso sobàykak ponnahostáskan*
 holisso sobàyka-k po-im-naho-stáska-n
 school-NOM 1PL-DAT-have-CAUSE-N

now that they are prepared.

4. As a hesitation form. Beyond these straightforward verbal uses, *naho* occurs somewhat surprisingly (at least to me) as a pause-filler like *um* or *er*.⁵ In this pause-filler function the bare stem alone is used, and sometimes *naho* occurs along with *uh* or *er*, as in 10⁶. This use is found in Koasati as well. In a draft of the *Koasati dictionary* (circa 1991), Kimball identifies the stem *na:ho* with a pause-filler that he glosses 'uh, um, er'. He notes that when it functions as a hesitation form *na:ho* can occur with any of the many Koasati verb suffixes (except pronominal affixes). Alabama tape recordings attest that *naho* has been used in this way at least since the 1950's. *Naho* typically occurs where a pause-filler would be expected. For instance, when speakers search for English words such as 'high school' or 'governor' when code-switching, *naho* is used. Often, speakers pause with *naho* when they are trying to remember an older, rarely used Alabama word, as in the case of 10, which is from an interview discussing the way the stickball game used to be played.

(10) *Māamok kapachiyōkkoti, pokko, naho, uh, nāasok,*
 now it wasn't the racquet ball NAHO something

poiachiiyok stimoiachit
 the goals they come with

'Now, I'm not talking about the racquet, ball, well, uh, something, it was the stickball goal posts they'd come with.'

The frequency of use of the pause-filler varies not only with genre or topic, but as we know from English, with the speaker as well. Example 11 is taken from the same interview as 10, but is spoken by the (at that time) young man (A) who conducted the interview in the late 1950's with an elderly man (B). One of my consultants recently mentioned this individual,

⁵Apparently it is not that uncommon for function words or semantically vague lexemes to be used as hesitation forms. For example, David Rood informs me that the Wichita pause morpheme is *ka:kirih* 'something'; other languages use forms of 'be' as fillers. A friend of mine regularly uses 'the uh' as a pause-filler. I suspect that the pronominal use of *naho* with noun morphology and the connection it suggests with the Muskogean cognate set for SOMETHING may provide the key to understanding the grammaticalization chain here (see Munro, et al. in preparation; Broadwell 1990; Munro and Willmond 1994).

⁶I give word glosses rather than morphemic analyses for examples in which *naho* has a purely discourse function, analyzing only the morphology on *naho* itself, so that readers may more easily focus their attention on the discourse.

who is now deceased, and recalled that he was 'always saying *naho*, *naho*'. Of course, conducting and tape recording an interview is not a common interaction for most people, and we might expect greater hesitation on the part of the interviewer, who is trying to keep the discussion alive and clarify the fine points.

(11) (Translation only, A: 'Now what about eating, did the men and the women eat together?')

B: 'Yes, they played together so they ate together.'

A: '*naho*, *ma oochafinaya*, *naho*, *akkáamit nahoomon*,
NAHO in the old days NAHO did this way would have

aatinaanihayok maaok, tayyihak libatlihchoolóskan,
the men alone women used to cook although

aatinaanihayok naho oolimpan aatistointalliimok,
the men NAHO food they would set out for them

aatinaanihak ommihchokómmín, naho, tayyihak yàafon nákson
the men it was always NAHO women here somewhere

stállàakatok, maaafon ostoiaablikok, naho aatinaanihak
settled there they brought NAHO men

ostoiaablikok, ya oolimpan stintallit anosliimok, naho
they brought that food set out for would finish NAHO

ibisnók naho nákson istállàakat oompahchootohá,
themselves too NAHO somewhere settled used to eat

homankan háalolihootook onkalo.
they said I used to hear them

'Like, in the olden days, like, this is the way they did when they were going to have it. Just the men, although the women cooked it, the men, like, set the food out for them, only the men were the ones at that time. Like, wherever the women were over there, they served them over there; like, the men brought it, they finished setting out the food for them, and then, like, they themselves were, like, sitting somewhere else eating, I used to hear them say.'

I have translated *naho* in this passage as *like*, not to imply necessarily that it functions in Alabama discourse like the innovating discourse functions of English *like*, but rather to suggest a similar frequency and distribution in some speech. Although it is still stigmatized by many and considered a sign of disfluency, *like* has been identified as a focus marker and quotative in the 'high-involvement' speech style of those under 40 (Romaine and Lange 1991; Underhill 1988). However, it may well be that *like*, cases such as 11 which may at first appear to be disfluent uses of the well-motivated hesitation form of 10 are even here functioning as discourse markers. Well, for

instance, could be substituted quite easily in a number of the translations for *naho* in 11; *well* seems to be used unproblematically as a common discourse marker by even the most prescriptive speakers (cf. Schiffrin 1987). And we can observe that *naho* is not distributed randomly throughout this utterance, but rather occurs at boundaries of grammatical or discourse units in a distribution not unlike that of *like* as described by Underhill (1988). Additional examples of *naho* used in conversation need to be analyzed to determine whether or not something like focus is being signalled. Certainly, more work needs to be done crosslinguistically on the kinds of words that are likely to occur as pause-fillers and the ways in which they may assume additional discourse functions.

5. As a conjunction and discourse marker. *Naho* occurs as a stem with a variety of verb suffixes to create discourse conjunctions which convey the range of meanings indicated by such English glosses as 'then', 'next', 'so', 'so then', 'so when', and 'until'. This development reflects a common pattern in Alabama and Muskogean in general, whereby a group of verbs with the diffuse semantics of 'be', 'happen', or 'do' (e.g. 'do like this', 'do that way', 'do however') have acquired functions as discourse conjunctions (see for example Kimball 1991:536-9; Munro, et al. in preparation; Broadwell in preparation; Booker 1980:202-7). I discuss here in detail just a few examples of these functions.

In example 12 for instance, the suffixation to *naho* of the sequential past tense marker *-too* and the discourse suffix *-k* translates as 'then' and marks the relationship between two sequentially occurring events in the narrative past. In this use as a verb suffix, the marker *-k* has generally been described as a same-subject switch reference marker (Booker 1980:164 and cf. Lupardus 1982:209ff). Although this description may capture the majority of its more local uses, it fails to explain what function *-k* (and its contrasting suffixes *-t* and *-n*) performs more 'globally' across stretches of discourse. The use of these suffixes on discourse conjunctions highlights this problem, as Broadwell has noted for Choctaw (Broadwell in preparation).

(12) *akkiyon hanonoyon ostinkat lipok ioykafòokon naho-too-k*
that one bullfrog go give eat when return NAHO-PSTSQ-K

ioyòhkat tooikatook
they return they ran

'when he had given that to the bullfrog to eat and started back,
then they ran back'

In 12, the clause *ioykafòokon* 'when (he) return(ed)' which precedes *nahotook* has an (unmarked) singular third person subject (the boys' uncle) and a singular verb stem followed by a temporal marker and the *-n* 'different subject' reference marker. The verb

that follows the conjunction, *loyohkat* 'they return', contains a dual verb with a different referent (the boys). And yet the conjunction is marked with the *-k* 'same subject' marker. In earlier analyses Davis and I suggest that *-k* is marking continuity of various types, not limited to 'subject' or 'topic' continuity (Davis and Hardy 1984, 1988). With respect to 12, we might note that although the two sequenced events have different subjects, the verbs are numbered variants of the same root 'return' and the second is contingent upon the first: the boys were hiding and waiting for the uncle to finish and go back before they followed him. So there is a continuity and connection in the narrative action. A clearer understanding of how these discourse suffixes function on conjunctions, and more broadly in discourse, awaits further research.

A somewhat similar explanation can be forwarded for the marking on *nahok* in 13. The conjunction is marked only with *-k* in this case. The past sequential marker *-too* occurs on the preceding verb *honāahotoon* 'they (the boys) had ready', which also takes the *-n* 'different subject' marker. In this case *-n* is signalling the discontinuity of the complex clause that follows the conjunction; *ilaachilaak ohonkatootāskan* 'since they (the relatives) had said they were coming' is a background clause that represents a departure from the narrative event line to remind the listener of an earlier discovery necessary to the plot. Its (understood) subject is the relatives who are coming to kill the boys. This clause provides the explanation that grounds the final clause in 13, *ohiⁿhinākkahlitoon* 'they waited for them', which returns to the event line with what the boys are doing.

- (13) *holawwit ānnōolit honāahotoon, naho-k ilaachilaak*
 many finish they had ready NAHO-K they will come

ohonkatootāskan, ohiⁿhinākkahlitoon
 they said since they waited for them

'(by night time) they had a lot of them (stinging insects) ready, so since they (the relatives) had said they were coming, they were waiting for them'

What the conjunction *nahok* signals here, I think, is that the upcoming discourse unit will be a continuation of the same episode (which describes how the clever boys have prepared to take care of the enemies that are coming to kill them) despite the fact that the immediately following clause switches to a new subject and new time frame (the first clause is in fact marked in the future, 'they will come'). Specifically, in terms of Schiffrin's schema (1987:202), the particular relationship signalled by *nahok* is to relate a number of causes (e.g., the boys had finished various preparations of a trap, relatives say they are coming to kill them) to an action (they waited for them)—a 'global' cause-result relationship. I have glossed this use as 'so', then, because it seems to accomplish what Schiffrin suggests *so* does: it has a superordinate function of introducing

a result, which implies something occurring before it as well as a transition from one circumstance to another (1987:225). Like *so* (as opposed to *because*), *naho* seems to mark MAIN IDEA UNITS rather than subordinate ones (cf. Schiffrin 1987:191).

There are two instances of *naho* in example 14, each suffixed with one of the other two discourse suffixes that form a set with *-k*, *nahot* 'until' with *-t* and *nahon* 'and next; then' with *-n*. The discourse suffix *-t* found on *nahot* requires that the verb to which it suffices has a subject referent that is the same as that of the following verb, as does *-k* in its most typical, local use. However, *-t* also signals a high degree of integration of the sequenced events such that they are perceived as a single internally complex event: *-t* marked clauses are unmarked for subject pronominal referents and lack tense and most aspectual markers. For instance the verb sequence discussed in 13 is typical; *ioyóhkat tooikatook* 'they ran back' has the *-t* marked verb *ioyohka* 'return' and the tensed verb *tooika* 'run (dual)', which together refer to the single event of 'running back home'. When used with *naho*, *-t* creates a conjunction that consistently translates as English 'until'. In 14 *nahot* connects two parts of what could have been presented as a single event in the completive aspect (soaked the corn) to highlight the completed result that the corn is ready (done) to be ground.

(14) *chassin okin oohókfok ohoochíkkililitoomok naho-t*
 corn water down in water they left sitting in NAHO-T

anookaamon naho-n kihchofaakon aliimok
 would be done NAHO-N in the mortar would put

'they would leave the corn sitting down in the water until it was done, and next they'd put it in that mortar'

Example 14 is taken from a brief process text describing the traditional method of grinding corn. In contrast with *-t* and *-k*, the *-n* found on *nahon* typically joins clauses with different subjects, hence its general identification as a 'different subject' reference marker (cf. Lupardus 1982:209). The conjunction *nahon* occurs frequently in process texts to mark the next stage in a sequence of actions that should be performed in order. *-n* is more common than the other two suffixes in texts of this genre, possibly because narrators often use impersonal subject constructions. Not surprisingly, *-n* occurs even under conditions of same subject reference, since the units being related are discrete subepisodes, sequences in a larger process, and the impersonal agents have low topicality.⁷

⁷In the speech of some narrators, *naho* also occurs unmarked with any suffixes at all in what appear to be the same functions as *nahok* and *nahon*.

Like some conjunctions in English, *naho* has developed functions that make it best viewed as a DISCOURSE MARKER. Discourse markers are 'sequentially dependent elements which bracket units of talk' and as such are simultaneously cataphoric and anaphoric devices (Schiffrin 1987:31). The discourse marker in 15, *nahoomon* 'so whenever' begins a sentence; the previous clause has a sentence-final aspectual suffix -o. This example is part of quoted speech by a dog trying to warn his master of impending doom and offer a plan of escape. The warning comes first in the form of the separate sentence preceding the discourse marker, which is in a stative verb construction and off the event line. To the master (and the listener) it provides the background knowledge necessary to motivate the dog's plan that follows. The verb suffixes on the marker *nahoomon* 'so whenever' also follow from the relationships among the discourse elements it connects. The marker is suffixed with the subjunctive -:ma, since the plan is referring to an unrealized event. It also requires the marker of discontinuity -n, since the time frames are radically different, as are the referents. In Schiffrin's terms, the marker operates locally to connect a 'motive' for a particular speech 'action' with the speech act that follows it, which is a polite command⁸ to the master to enact the dog's plan, that is, an account/request pair (1987:208).

- (15) *hachibilak* *ayàachihchommo* *naho:-m-o-n*
 they will kill y'all they are around to NAHO-SJNC-ASP-N

oompat fayhachiimok oolimpa alàhkayon oki istalka ayákhon
 eat y'all finish food remaining water stand near

maapooⁿsòofchin
 you throw to us

'They are here to kill y'all. So whenever y'all finish eating you will throw the leftovers to us over by the water.'

One clear bracketing function which is shown in 16 is to introduce reported speech, or what Tannen (1986) has called 'constructed dialogue', similar to the innovation of *go* and *be + like* in contemporary English (Romaine and Lange 1991). Otherwise, in Alabama the standard quotative verb always follows the quoted speech, so if the speaker or addressee are not named, there is no other transition from the narrative to the quoted material, except the raised pitch that some speakers use to mark this boundary. However, this use of *naho* as a transition marker from narrative to quoted speech occurs as an extension of the semantics of 'result' discussed above that align *naho* with

⁸The standard singular imperative form is an unmarked verb: second person reference is omitted, as is tense marking. In narrative 'constructed' speech, at least, commands or requests are often indicated by future tense and second person pronominal reference marking.

English *so*. In 16 the background descriptive summary that I have given only in translation provides the 'cause' for the following constructed speech which is the 'result' marked by *nahon*. Since Alabama lacks other means of introducing quoted speech, it is possible that *naho* could develop into a general quote marker outside of the semantic context of cause and result.

(16) ('it was in the morning a few days later and it was that morning that the relatives were intending to come kill them')
naho-n iⁿlaklisa wihhili katoolo pasaalosikok
 NAHO-N stinging insects let's seek said the boy

So, 'Let's go look for stinging insects!', said the boy.

Other bracketing functions of *naho* at clear discourse boundaries are shown in 17 and 18. These seem to function as markers of participation transitions, a function which Schifffrin (1987:217) shows that *so* in English has, but *because* does not. In 17 *naho* initiates the turns of both speakers and changes the topic from the preceding general discussion of how the stickball game was played. In 18 *naho* is used to conclude a turn and in fact signals the end of that conversation.

(17) Q: *unh, naho, tatkoot ilabiikat aatapihommaya*
 unh NAHO any whites they come the Indians

aatoibaahompanitikkohchootōskā?
 didn't they ever used to play with them

'Well, uh, didn't white people ever come to play with the Indians?'

A: *naho yáííok Tom Kipsichōobayáííok*
 NAHO just Old Tom Gibson alone

'Well, just old Tom Gibson was the only one.'

(18) Q: *ittaltāalyáííi? oh mooliíya alíilamoolo*
 only the middle? oh well thank you

aⁿfatchiyon naho
 you tell me about it NAHO

'Only the middle? Oh, well, thank you for telling me about it, then.'

A number of texts show *naho* used with the overt topic marker *-ya* (which can occur on verbs of subordinate clauses); these markers usually appear at the beginning of a conversational turn. *Nahoya* in 19 was used by the interviewer to continue the topic by requesting additional details, after the previous speaker had appeared to conclude a lengthy narration on the topic of how bear hunts were conducted.

- (19) *māamin naho-ya nitan hoooliimā nitaya*
 but NAHO-TOP bear if they chase bear

hoyoopahchóot aatiⁿhoopachitíkkohchootooli káasok?
 used to get angry didn't it used to injure them however

'Well, but when they hunted bears, didn't the bear sometimes get angry and injure them, however?'

The marker *nahoyok* also includes the topic marker *-ya* and is followed by *-k* 'same subject'; it occurs in narratives at major discourse boundaries. For example, like so in English, *nahoyok* is used to introduce the coda after the complicating action of a narrative; Schiffrin points out that this discourse function of *so* in marking the resolution of the complicating action is semantically analogous to its local use to mark the result of a causal sequence (1987:204). In 20 *nahoyok* brackets the coda of a narrative about a man captured by the fairies, little invisible people whose ways are opposite to people's, as the story demonstrates.

- (20) *naho-y-o-k aatilhichíksosikàamiyok imallitamok*
 NAHO-TOP-ASP-K fairies like that their customs

'So, that's the way it is with those little people's customs: (summary follows)''.

In 21 *nahoyok* is used to mark a switch from conversation to the beginning of a narrative after a brief discussion in English about whether or not the person requesting the telling of the story has heard it already. The narrator asks him in English if he hasn't heard this story already and he says yes but only the English version, so she then introduces the story in the Alabama language as follows:

- (21) *naho-y-o-k sattayok sáhmin ittiiliyok hohommatook*
 NAHO-TOP-ASP-K the turtle why eyes were red

ommiyon akkiyon íóokát hachiⁿfatililáo
 it is the case that one again I will tell y'all

'Anyway, this is the one about the turtle and why his eyes are red, I'm going to tell you that one again.'

I have translated this use of the marker as 'anyway' because like the English it seems to mark the prior conversation as peripheral to the main point, which is the ensuing narrative; *nahoyok* occurs within narratives as well to return to the main story line after an explanatory digression. However, this example can also be interpreted as a case of *naho* marking a result; that is, the request and its justification produce the result that the speaker will again tell the story, the identity of which is already the topic of conversation.

In all its discourse uses *naho* is marking some sort of boundary, which is usually the transition to a result of something that has gone on before. In this respect, the pragmatics of *naho* as a discourse marker seem closest to that of English *so*, but its ability to combine with numerous discourse suffixes lends it nuances that occasionally make other English discourse markers seem better translations. But even in process texts where *naho* is generally translated 'next' or 'then', there is a sense in which the next step in a process could be perceived as depending on the previous step having been accomplished, if not strictly as its result. Furthermore, the markers occur at transition points between major stages (or subepisodes) in a process.

6. Conclusion. Investigation of a wide range of texts collected from a number of speakers over a time period of about eighty years suggests that these discourse functions may be of fairly recent origin. In the Swanton materials, which include a short grammatical sketch (1922-23) and numerous rapidly transcribed dictated texts circa 1910, I have so far found examples of only the locative verb use of *naho*.⁹ We would not expect to find pause-fillers in texts recorded at such a slow pace, but given their frequency in contemporary narratives, we would expect at least occasional uses as an auxiliary or conjunction if they were in common usage at that time. Tapes recorded in the late 1950's include only occasional use by older speakers of *naho* as a pause-filler, and infrequent use as a perfect auxiliary, but only one instance of what appears to be a discourse marker. *Naho* as a conjunction appears limited to the sequencing function 'next, and then' in process texts and was not used by the narrators of histories and legends. Younger speakers recorded at the same time used the full range of functions of *naho* described here. On the other hand, certain other discourse particles and conjunctions (e.g. *mók*) occur with higher frequency in the older texts than in contemporary texts.

The conjunction and, ultimately, discourse marker functions discussed here appear then to have developed from the lexical verb¹⁰ use of *naho*—possibly via the perfect construction—rather than the lexical meanings having arisen from their discourse-pragmatic functions (see the relevant theoretical discussion in Heine, Claudi, and Hünemeyer 1991:238ff). Consider the discussion of the perfect in example 9. The perfect is marked with the auxiliary *naho*, which like all auxiliaries in Muskogean languages follows the lexical verb. In this position, the

⁹Swanton records the verb as *naha* as well as *naho*.

¹⁰Reconstructing the diachronic source of *naho* requires consideration of comparative evidence as well as the prenominal discourse use mentioned in section 1, and is the subject of a larger study.

auxiliary in effect stands at the boundary between the result of an action presented as a state and the subsequent events of the narrative. These perfect clauses frequently serve as background clauses that have 'present relevance' with respect to the immediately following narrative event. In 9 the narrative sequence in translation would be '... , (since) they had them wrapped thickly. (So) again they went back to where they had gone before ...'. The auxiliary, which can be marked with all relevant verb morphology, is in a position to be interpreted as actually marking the boundary, i.e. as a conjunction. The other types of more specific 'do' verbs referred to in 5 (e.g. *yáhmí* 'do like this', *akkáhmí* 'do that way', *máhmí* 'do so') have cognates throughout Muskogean which have developed into discourse conjunctions. Alabama has a large number of such conjunctions derived from these stems with elaborate verb morphology; most of these verbs also have auxiliary uses that have grammaticized to the point of becoming verb suffixes of adverbial modification.

At this point, *naho* seems to have achieved the various conditions that Schifffrin suggests are necessary for a linguistic expression to become a discourse marker. They should be syntactically detachable from a sentence and often used in utterance-initial position. Conjunctions, of course, are at best problematically attached to sentences. In Alabama, the discourse conjunctions often occur at what appears to be the beginning of sentences or paragraphs, but in some cases seems to be part of the same intonation unit as a preceding clause. Most importantly, the expression must be 'able to operate at both local and global levels of discourse' because it has either 'no meaning, [or] a vague meaning' (Schifffrin 1987:328). A verb stem with the referential meaning of 'be' or 'do' would seem to satisfy this condition as well.

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